

# Readings from the Word of God

## Sunday, 23 May 2021

### **Luke 2:39-52**

So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. <sup>43</sup> When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; <sup>44</sup> but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. <sup>45</sup> So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. <sup>46</sup> Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. <sup>48</sup> So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

### **Matthew 21:28-32**

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?"

They said to Him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him."

### **Exodus 1:8-14**

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.

### ***Secrets of Heaven §6663***

When this is being done, not only are the truths and goods strengthened which had been implanted before, but more are instilled; this being the result of every spiritual combat in which the combatant is victorious. That it is so is also plain from common experience; for he who defends his opinion against others who attack it, confirms himself the more in his opinion, and then also finds other confirmations of it which he had not before observed, and also others which deny the opposite; and in this way he strengthens himself in his opinion, and also illustrates it with further considerations. This is still more perfectly the case with spiritual combats, because the combat takes place in the spirit, and has to do with goods and truths; and especially because the Lord is present and leads by the angels; for the contest is concerning eternal life and salvation.

### ***Luke 22:31-32***

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

### ***True Christian Religion §721***

These two sacraments, baptism and the Holy Supper, function as the two gateways to eternal life. Baptism, which is the first gateway, gives admittance and introduces every Christian into all that the church teaches from the Word about the other life. All these teachings are means by which we can be prepared for heaven and led toward it. The second gateway is the Holy Supper. Through it, all who have allowed themselves to be prepared and led by the Lord are given admittance to and brought into heaven. There are no other universal gateways.

### ***Secrets of Heaven §4334:4***

So eating and drinking in the Holy Supper do not in the spiritual sense mean eating and drinking but making the good of the Lord's Divine love one's own